



2

PRIME MINISTER

**TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P.J. KEATING MP
DOORSTOP, BOURKE, WEDNESDAY, 5 APRIL 1995**

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PM: Well, I have just had a meeting with the farm community here and we have just been talking about the problems of drought and drought protection for the future, problems about water storage and how areas like the western region here and NSW can survive drought into the future. We discussed some of the measures the Commonwealth has already introduced, some things that we might change and they are going to give me a submission about that. But, I am happy to take questions by and large.

J: You said this morning that you wanted to take the 'spirit of Fred Hollows', of getting things done, to Aboriginal health. Can Carmen Lawrence do that in control of the Department of Health?

PM: I think that we spend \$34 billion a year on health and the important thing is to let the Aboriginal community into those big programs. I think also the Commonwealth Department of Health has the possibility of being able to deal with the State health departments to try to get some of these services delivered. Anyway these are matters the Government is currently reviewing.

J: You said you didn't want to interfere in the super league, but doesn't the Government have a role in ensuring that the best football is free to air?

PM: The Government has got a thing called anti-syphoning rules, so that the public are able to watch all the things that they currently see - the Winfield Cup is part of that and it is subject to it - but this is not really a matter for the Government. It is a matter for the courts, it is I think, a matter for the rugby league and News Limited and the courts and we will see what happens. We are seeing, obviously, a change in the organisation of football, but the Government has always said and has done what it said in protecting what one would term, supporters and viewers interests in terms of sport and, of course, not just football.

J: So, if it got to the stage where it wasn't going to be on free to air, you could intervene?

PM: It is not a matter for us. This is really a matter for, as I say, News Limited, the rugby league and the courts, I think.

J: Is Senator Noel Crichton-Browne someone that you feel should be in the Senate?

PM: I think the important thing about this is that other people have been saying correctly, I think, about Mr Howard that this is a test of his leadership and he put around a day or so ago that he obliged Senator Crichton-Browne to resign. In other words, 'look at me, what a strong person I am'. It turned out that it's not true. I think Senator Crichton-Browne resigned himself and notified Mr Howard. What this reveals is what we have always known about Mr Howard - he is utterly indecisive and lacks strength. This was most obviously revealed when he had two representatives representing himself on the Western Australian executive and now, when faced with this sort of problem it gets resolved by the Senator resigning himself, not being obliged to by Mr Howard. This will be the same in every matter Mr Howard touches - lacks decisiveness and lacks strength.

J: Do you think Labor will do better in the Senate now in WA?

PM: The next Federal election is quite a way off, so I'm confident that when we get past the fairy floss of polls and the rest down to the real issues the Labor party didn't win five elections on the trot for nothing. It won them because it was better. Thank you.

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